

WATER

Matters

January/February 2005

Putting Water Supply Plans into Action

Protecting and ensuring adequate sources for today and tomorrow

It's easy to take water for granted. Without giving it much thought, you just turn on the faucet and out it comes. But at the South Florida Water Management District, we're constantly thinking about the water needs of people and the environment... and we're taking action to address future needs.

About 7 million people, including farms and businesses, contribute to the more than 3 billion gallons of water used every day in central and southern Florida. With our rapidly growing population, the water demand for the year 2020 is projected to be 4.6 billion gallons per day. Ensuring an adequate supply of water to protect, enhance and restore natural systems and to meet all other existing and projected reasonable-beneficial needs is a fundamental element of the South Florida Water Management District mission.

"Our job is to evaluate long-term water supply demands and to plan for and develop appropriate water resource projects to address those needs," said District Executive Director Henry Dean.

REGIONAL VERSUS LOCAL

It's a big job and can't be done in isolation. That's why the District works closely with other agencies, local governments and utilities, the agricultural industry and environmental interests. Public involvement and understanding of agency responsibilities is critical in developing and implementing long-term plans and strategies.

"We protect and preserve water in its raw, natural state by studying water availability and demands from a region-wide perspective – including the needs of the environment," said Dean. "In turn, we share our data with local

utilities – the retailers. They are responsible for treating and delivering the water directly to your home and business."

The District's nearly 18,000 square-mile area is divided into four distinct planning regions: Kissimmee, Upper East Coast, Lower East Coast and Lower West Coast. The development of comprehensive water supply plans particular to each region is key to identifying and understanding current and future water needs.

Based on a 20-year outlook, these plans, initially completed in 2000, provide detailed, basin-specific information and recommended actions. Analyses are conducted to evaluate the impacts of projected demands and natural system needs on available water resources. Sophisticated computer models are used to provide extensive data on multiple "what if" scenarios. This allows District planners to identify potential problem areas and to thoroughly analyze the effectiveness of proposed solutions. Plans typically include regional and local recommendations, along with potential funding strategies for implementation.

Regional Water Supply Plans are updated every five years. Public workshops and open communication with environmental and agricultural interests, as well as close coordination with county and municipal officials, play important roles in the plan revisions.

continued inside

in this issue...

- ▶ Innovative AWS projects
- ▶ Service Center roundup
- ▶ Everglades progress
- ▶ Find Freddy
- ▶ Day at the District
- ▶ Birding tours take off
- ▶ Ask Freddy

South Florida Water Management District
P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
West Palm Beach, FL
Permit #22